

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJECT: CONGRESS ESTABLISHES COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE SOCIAL
WELFARE

MINISTRY AND CRUZADA JUSTICIALISTA

REF: BA-6313; BA-6454

1. DURING EVENING SESSION OCT 23, THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, BY
UNANIMOUS VOTE, ESTABLISHED A SEVEN MAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION
TO INVESTIGATE THE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY AND THE CRUZADA JUSTI-
CIALISTA. THE COMMISSION HAS 120 DAYS TO COMPLETE ITS INVESTIGA-
TION AND FILE A REPORT WITH THE CHAMBER.

2. IN COMPLETE REVERSAL OF FORM, PERONISTS WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY
FOUGHT TO PREVENT ISSUE OF INVESTIGATION EVEN BEING DEBATED, LAST
NIGHT INTRODUCED THE MOTION SETTING UP THE COMMISSION. IN MAKING
RESOLUTION THEIR OWN, PERONISTS ASKED THAT INVESTIGATIONS OF SOCIAL
WELFARE MINISTRY COVER YEARS 1966 TO PRESENT RATHER THAN 1973 TO
PRESENT AS UCR HAD PROPOSED. PERONISTS APPARENTLY HOPE TO MITIGATE
NEGATIVE FINDINGS EXPECTED ON LOPEZ REGA'S STEWARDSHIP BY UNEARTH-
ING SCANDALS IN PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS AS WELL. OF ACTIVE POLITI-
CIANS, ONLY MANRIQUE, OF FEDERALIST PARTY, HOWEVER, COULD BE BADLY
HURT BY THIS MOVE.

3. DURING DEBATE AND IN INTERVIEWS WITH NEWSMEN AFTER SESSION,
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BOTH GOVT AND OPPOSITION DEPUTIES INTERPRETED VOTE AS BEING ONE

FOR "PUBLIC MORALITY" AND CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. NO PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY FREJULI LEADERSHIP IN OR OUT OF CONGRESS ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN PARTIES' ABRUPT ABOUT FACE ON ISSUE. AS INVESTIGATION OF CRUZADA JUSTICIALSTA WILL SURELY GET INTO CHECK ISSUE (SEE REFTTEL), BOTH GOVT AND OPPOSITION FULLY AWARE COMMISSION IS DEALING WITH POLITICAL DYNAMITE. THUS, ON SURFACE, PERONIST DECISION PUZZLING. MOST COMMENTATORS ATTRIBUTE THEIR ABOUT FACE TO THE PARTY'S REALIZATION IT COULD BEST LIMIT DAMAGE TO ITSELF BY TRYING TO CONTAIN ISSUE IN PRIVATE COMMISSION MEETINGS RATHER THAN ALLOWING ITSELF TO BE PILLORIED IN FULL PUBLIC VIEW FOR CONTINUING TO BLOCK RESOLUTION IN CONGRESS.

4. OPPOSITION, WHILE PLEASED BY LAST NIGHT'S RESULTS, HAS SHOWN EVERY INDICATION IT PLANS TO PUSH FORWARD ON CORRUPTION ISSUE. SENATOR DE LA RUA OF UCR HAS CALLED FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF GOA'S HANDLING OF THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACTS LET TO BUILD THE "ALTER OF THE FATHERLAND". THE PROJECT IS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH LOPEZ REGA AND CHANGES OF CURRUPTION IN CONNECTION WITH IT ARE WIDESPREAD. ANOTHER SCANDAL JUST UNEARTHED NOW THREATENS TO ECLIPSE THE CHECK SCANDAL. ACCORDING TO NEWSMEN AND POLITICAL CONTACTS, THE MUNICIPALITY OF BUENOS AIRES SIGNED OVER TITLE ON APPROXIMATELY 200 ACRES OF LAND TO THE CRUZADA JUSTICIALISTA TO BE USED TO BUILD A LOW-COST HOUSING COMPLEX. RATHER THAN BUILD, HOWEVER, THE CRUZADA - THROUGH ONE OF ITS OFFICERS, MRS. NORMA LOPEZ REGA DE LASTIRI - SOLD THE LAND TO PRIVATE INTERESTS AND POCKETED THE FUNDS. LA PRENSA HAS HINTED PUBLICLY AT SCANDAL BUT OTHER PAPERS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE UP THE HUE AND CRY SHORTLY.

5. COMMENT. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF VERTICALISTAS CAN CONTROL COMMISSION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO KEEP MRS. PERON OUT OF DIRECT LINE OF FIRE WHEN ITS REPORT ISSUED. IF AS EXPECTED REPORT AND OTHER MISDEEDS PROVE TOO EMBARRASSING TO BE COVERED UP, IT IS POSSIBLE ANTI-VERTICALISTAS AND OTHERS WHO WISH HER REMOVED FROM PRESIDENCY WILL HAVE FOUND THE LEVER THEY HAVE BEEN SEEKING. IN THIS REGARD, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE IS INCREASING TALK OF IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS. INDEED, SENATOR DE LA RUA, AT RECENT SOCIAL FUNCTION, INSISTED TO AMBASSADOR HILL THAT "SHE MUST BE IMPEACHED."

HILL

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